

Moses B. Ives House (Bishop's House)
10 Brown Street, southwest corner
Brown and Charles Field Streets
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-199

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
99-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-199

MOSES B. IVES HOUSE (BISHOP'S HOUSE)

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
99-

Address: 10 Brown Street, southwest corner Brown and
Charles Field Streets, Providence, Providence
County, Rhode Island.
Plat 16, Lot 151.

Present Owner: Rhode Island Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal
Church, 101 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode
Island.

Present Occupant: Rt. Rev. John Seville Higgins

Present Use: Residence for the Bishop of the Diocese of
Rhode Island

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is an example of a large elegant house,
built about 1835 for one of the prominent wealthy
families in Providence, and now used as the resi-
dence for Episcopal Bishop of Rhode Island.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1832 On August 10, 1832 Nicholas Brown, deeded to
Moses Brown Ives and to Robert Hale Ives the E/ly
part of the 2-acre lot (Deed Book 75, page 19, in
Providence City Hall) bounded: N by Charles Field
Street; E by Brown Street; S by lands of James
Brown; W by lot deeded by Nicholas Brown to them
as of 2/3/1832... Harrison S Taft Papers Vol. 7..
page 60...Rhode Island Historical Society.

1832 Moses B. Ives listed at 36 South Main Street...
Providence Directory.

1837 Moses B. Ives listed at this address in the next
Directory published, dated 1836/1837...Providence
Directory.

1839 Robert Hale Ives deeded all his rights and interest
in the above said lot to his brother Moses. (Deed
Book 73, page 257, in Providence City Hall.) It
was at the corner of Brown and Charles Field Streets
and on the above lot Moses Brown Ives built his
own homestead, now the so-called "Bishops House"
...Harrison S Taft Papers..Vol 7..page 60..Rhode
Island Historical Society.

- 1854 Hope Ives, widow, deed to her son Moses Brown Ives (Deed Book 136, page 19, in Providence City Hall) that part of the John Brown Mansion lot located between Brown Street on the E: 155.07'; S by Power Street 98-1/2'; N by grantee 95.7'. being all the part of the "John Brown Estate" so-called conveyed to me by Anne F. Herreshoff et al in 1852 which lies W of Brown Street...Harrison S Taft Papers..Vol 7..page 60..Rhode Island Historical Society
- 1857 Moses Brown Ives, deceased, left his homestead estate as adjacent to the W side of Brown and the S side of Charles Field streets and as opposite the homestead estate of his parents (Wills Book 18, page 183, in Providence City Hall) to his daughter Hope Brown Ives (Mrs. Henry G Russell) Taft Paper..Vol 7..page 60... Rhode Island Historical Society
- 1898 Hope Brown Russell and Henry G Russell give to the R I Episcopal Convention a certain tract of land bounded E by Brown Street 286.82' S by Power Street 100.07' and H I Gammell 150.27'; W by Robert H Gammell 132.35'; and N by Charles Field Street 244.04'., for the purpose of a residence for the Bishop for the time being of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of R I...Deed Book 416, page 468, in Providence City Hall
- 1959 Property taxed to the Diocese of Rhode Island
2. Date of erection: Between 1832 and 1837
3. Notes on alterations and additions: The house has undergone two major remodelings, in 1870 and about 1911. In 1870 the bay windows on the north and south sides and the porch on the south and west sides were added, changing the entrance to the house from the north side to the south side. Much of the first floor finish, particularly in the dining room, is apparently later as indicated in the description.
4. Sources of information: John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957). p. 107.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
January 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large, elegant house, built about 1835, that shows Greek Revival influence in some of the details. Extensive alterations and additions were made in 1870 and about 1911.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Main block, 50' x 47', two stories, facing south. Wing to east, 30' x 34'. Large bay windows in main block, on first floor, north side in central hall, south side in dining room, added 1870.
2. Foundations: Fieldstone on inside, regular coursed ashlar on exterior.
3. Wall construction: Stucco, painted pink. Flat, simplified pilaster set out at corners, carry across as entablature.
4. Porches: One-story wood porch around south and west sides with paired fluted Ionic columns, added 1870.
5. Chimneys: Four in outside walls of main block, southwest one increased in size.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Six-panel main entrance door in paneled doorway. Present entrance at east end of porch on south side of house, added 1870. Original entrance on north side of house where present bay window is. Rear door on east end of wing.
 - b. Windows: Large double hung, single light sash in main block. Six over six light or two over two light double hung windows in wing.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable, shingles.
 - b. Cornice: Simple wood cornice with crown mold, horizontal cornice carried across gable ends to form pediments.

C. Technical Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: Central-hall plan with stairhall at right angles to hall toward east. Four rooms on first floor of main block with double connecting parlors on west, dining room on southeast, study on northeast. Kitchen and other service rooms in wing toward the east. Bedrooms on second floor in similar arrangement. Storerooms

on third floor in attic. Central hall originally opened north to Charles Field Street, now opens south. North end of hall with large bay window now a chapel. Central hall 8'-8" wide.

2. Stairways: Main stairway, apparently later, U-shape, closed string, open well to third floor, heavy molded outside string, molded handrail, heavy turned balusters and carved and paneled square newels.
3. Flooring: Narrow strip flooring on first floor, laid in patterns in some areas. Wide boards, 3-1/2"-7", on second floor.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, papered or painted. Complex plaster cornices, panels and medallions first floor ceilings. Dining room walls entirely paneled, dark stained wood, apparently later.
5. Doors and doorways: Mahogany, dark natural stain, three panel doors, on first floor; heavy molded, mitered architraves; complex doorway cornices in parlor. Simpler Greek Revival pilaster trim on second floor doors and windows.
6. Trim: Paneled interior folding shutters, paneled window aprons.
7. Hardware: Silver plated knobs, butt hinges, and key hole covers.
8. Lighting: Electric - crystal chandeliers in both parlors and in dining room, large glass ceiling lantern in central hall.
9. Heating: Central heat. Four fireplaces on each floor of main block. Elaborate carved wood mantels in southwest parlor and dining room, apparently later. Marble mantels elsewhere, some with round-headed openings, two on second floor with Ionic pilasters.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: At southwest corner of Charles Field and Brown Streets, doorway on south side of house off Brown Street. Long yard to south of the house.

2. Enclosures: Brick fence with stone coping on east, iron fence with stone posts on north.
3. Walks, driveways: Flagstone walk to main entrance from Brown Street, asphalt driveway alongside.
4. Landscaping: Informal garden with large open lawn, trees, shrubs, flowers.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
January 1962